

# Meriden Department of Health and Human Services

*Working for Our Community*



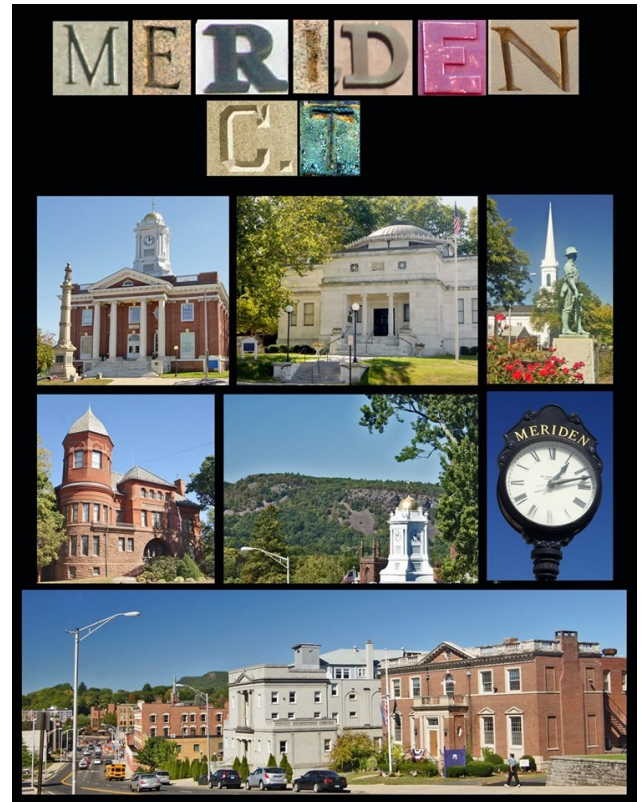
**Annual Report 2019/2020**



Dear Meriden Community,

This report is focused on activities conducted throughout the year related to the 10 Essential Public Health Services (see page 3 for the full list). The 10 Essential Public Health Services describe the public health activities that all communities should undertake.

This annual report is not all-inclusive of the work we do for our community. For a complete list of roles and responsibilities of each office, please visit our website at [www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com). Or, please feel free to call or email our staff, a contact list is located on page 31 of this report.



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# Message from the Director



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Dear Meriden Community,

I am pleased to present to you the 2019-20 Meriden Department of Health and Human Services annual report.

This report provides a summary of the many ways in which our Department touches the lives of Meriden residents each and every day to achieve healthy people in healthy communities. We strive to maintain high-quality services as we navigate a rapidly changing public health landscape and health care system.

This past fiscal year saw us conducting extensive surveillance and outreach on Eastern Equine Encephalitis, operating an overnight shelter during the New Year's holiday, and receiving a large federal grant to address substance use and abuse in partnership with Rushford. Then, the COVID-19 pandemic made its way to Meriden in March 2020, which altered the way we provide the 10 Essential Services to our community.

Whether protecting the health of our residents through immunizations and disease investigation, or reducing the incidence of foodborne illness through our inspection and licensing of food service establishments, we actively identify and respond to a wide variety of public health problems and issues. These efforts would not be possible without the talent and dedication of our professional staff.

I would like to thank our staff, the City Manager, City Council and Mayor, our community partners, and the residents of Meriden for continuing to provide us with the support and collaboration we need to do the work that we do each and every day.

In good health,

*Lea Crown*

Lea Crown, MPH  
Director of Health and Human Services

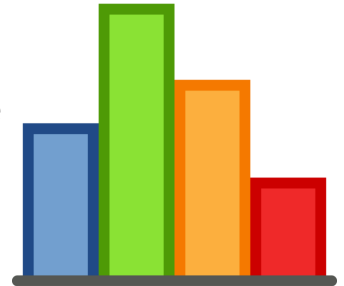
## Ten Essential Public Health Services

1. Monitor health status and understand health issues facing the community.
2. Protect people from health problems and health hazards.
3. Give people information they need to make healthy choices.
4. Engage the community to identify and solve health problems.
5. Develop public health policies and plans.
6. Enforce public health laws and regulations.
7. Help people receive health services.
8. Maintain a competent public health workforce.
9. Evaluate and improve programs and interventions.
10. Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.

# 1. Community Assessment

***Conduct and disseminate assessments focused on population health status and public health issues facing the community.***

Our programs and services strive to reflect the current needs of the community. One way we determine which programs to provide is to conduct and/or participate in community assessments in Meriden. Our most recent resources include local assessments conducted by MidState Medical Center, DataHaven, the United Way and the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition. We have also conducted our own surveillance on influenza, STD rates, and health equity and access to care.



We also utilize state and federal statistics, including those from the Connecticut Department of Public Health, Connecticut Open Data, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the Trust for America's Health, and the U.S. Census. Often, we benchmark our data to Healthy People 2020 and other towns and cities comparable to Meriden.

## **Meriden Demographics**

Population (2019 American Community Survey)	59,864
% White	81.2%
% Black or African American	10.3%
% American Indian and Alaska Native	0.4%
% Asian	1.5%
% Hispanic	27.4%
Female / Male	53.6% / 46.4%
Age 65 or Over	16.7%
Age 19 and Younger	19.6%
High School Graduation Rate	80.1 %
Persons without health insurance	3.6%
With a disability and under 65	12.1%
Median Household Income	\$57,886
Percent in Poverty	11.7%

*Sources: 2019 American Community Survey (US Census), EdSight, Meriden Board of Education, 2019 Data Haven Community Well-Being Survey*



**This past year we have increased utilization of several new surveillance and information systems:**

### **CT WiZ**

As of September 17, 2018, the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) Immunization Program replaced the Connecticut Immunization Registry and Tracking System (CIRTS), the Vaccine Tracking System (VTrckS) and AFIX with one new system called "CT WiZ".



CT WiZ is the statewide Immunization Information System (IIS) designed to meet national standard requirements for effective tracking and administration of immunizations in a public health setting. It is a web-based database that maintains complete, accurate, and secure immunization records for all Connecticut children. Our Clinic staff has access to this database to track immunization records for children in Meriden in order to comply with the immunization requirements for school, childcare, camps, and even college.

### **ODMAP**

The Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program (ODMAP) is an online application used to collect and map near real-time suspected overdose surveillance data across jurisdictions. It is a tool to support first responders and public health efforts to mobilize an immediate response to a sudden increase or spike in overdose events. This tool is only available to government (state, local, federal, or tribal) agencies serving the interests of public safety and health. Our Director of Health has Level 1 and 2 access which includes entering and managing the entry of suspected overdoses and view of the national map to analyze data.

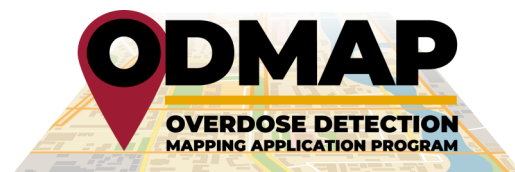


Tableau is a website our office also uses for data on overdose deaths in Connecticut. Data can be categorized by age group, gender, type of location where the overdose occurred, and drugs commonly used.

### **ContaCT**

ContaCT is Connecticut's statewide voluntary and confidential software system for monitoring the health and wellbeing of people affected by COVID-19 through contact tracing.



Contact tracing is a tool used by public health departments to isolate positive cases and identify their close contacts to help stop further spread of COVID-19. We are actively using this tool to help stop the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

For more information on contact tracing please go to the COVID-19 section at the end of this report.

### **Zen City**

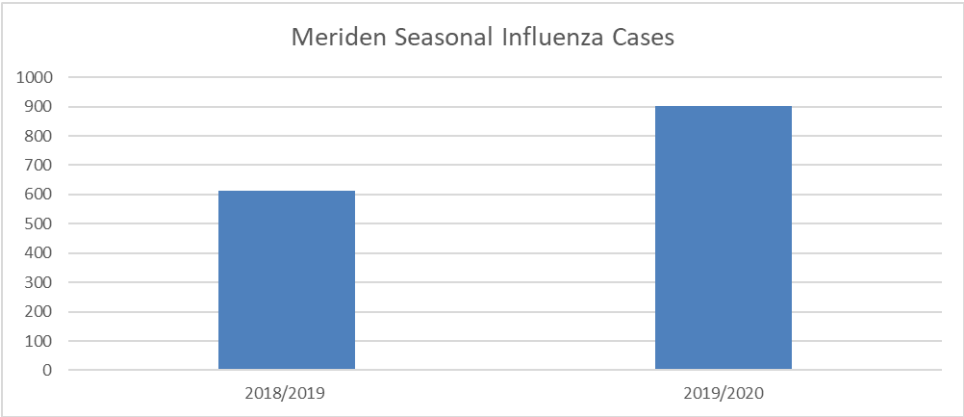
Zen City is an online platform that helps local governments analyze feedback from community members in real-time to inform decision makers, evaluate the City's performance, identify trends and emerging issues, improve efficiency, and the relationship/communication with residents.



The City of Meriden started using Zen City in August of 2019 to help monitor what trending topics residents are talking about and feedback residents may have after announcements or after an incident occurred.

# Influenza Report

Influenza—better known as the flu - is a reportable disease; this means that local health departments receive a report when flu is diagnosed by a health provider, hospital, or laboratory. This allows our Departments to conduct local surveillance and implement appropriate prevention, risk reduction, and response initiatives. We also monitor the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS) in case there are any reported flu cases that we did not receive a paper report for.



Our total confirmed case count for this season was 902; this was an increase over the previous season (614 confirmed). We also saw cases earlier this year (October 7, 2019) than last year, when we received our first positive report October 15, 2018. It is important to note that our office only receives lab confirmed cases of influenza; those who do not seek care and get tested for influenza are not included in this count. The CT Department of Public Health (CT DPH) confirmed that because walk-in clinics/urgent care centers changed the type of test used to diagnose the flu our cases went up. A full copy of this report can be found on our website.

# Health Equity Report

In 2019 Desiree Rondeau, MPH candidate, worked with our department to conduct an assessment of health equity in the City of Meriden. This assessment helped the department identify what the social influencers of health are in the community, what health inequities exist, why they exist, who may be impacted, and to make recommendations to improve the health status of Meriden residents.

After analyzing the data, Desiree interviewed community partners to ask their opinions on current situations, what improvement should be made, and what actions, policies, or funding priorities would they support. A full copy of this report can be found on our website.

City of Meriden Health Equity Assessment Report - 2019



# Youth Need Assessment

Our Public Health Educator is in the process of working on a community needs assessment specifically focusing on Meriden youth. This extensive report uses the social determinants of health (neighborhoods and built environment, health and healthcare, social and community context, education, and economic stability) and to identify youth needs in Meriden.



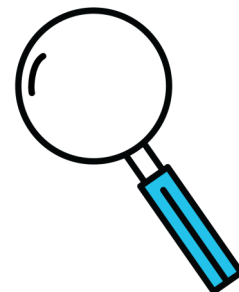
The goals of this assessment are to get feedback from residents, colleagues, and local agencies regarding the health and well-being of youths in Meriden, to develop and implement new programs in the future, and evaluate current programming. Once the assessment is complete, data and findings will be updated as new information is available.

## 2. Investigate Health Problems

***Investigate health problems and environmental public health hazards to protect the community.***

### **Communicable Disease and Prevention**

The following is a sample of communicable diseases and conditions that have been reported to our health department in the last few years. These cases and more are required to be reported to us per Connecticut General Statute 19a-215. We receive mailed paper reports and monitor electronic reports through the Connecticut Electronic Disease Surveillance System (CT EDSS).



Reports Reviewed	2018-19	2019-20
Lyme/Tickborne Illness	29	54
Foodborne Illness	12	21
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	575	464
Group A/B Streptococcus and Staph	37	71
Hepatitis (B and C)	101	173
Influenza	614	902
Long Term Care Outbreaks	14	5
COVID-19		883**

*\*\* This number reflects the number of cases reported from the beginning of the outbreak (March 2020) until June 30, 2020.*

### **Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention**

In Meriden, children with a lead level of 5mg/dL or more are provided with follow-up and consultation by our Environmental Health staff. Follow-up may include phone calls, home visits, consultation with the primary health care provider and a home lead risk assessment. The ultimate goal is to reduce environmental lead exposure and lead poisoning.

In 2019-2020 our office:

- Conducted 153 lead screenings in our Clinic, of which only 2 were over 10mg/dL.
- Reviewed 64 lead lab reports, of which the vast majority (41) were between 5 and 20mg/dL.





## Vaccines Given

Our Clinic office provides adult and child vaccinations, including the seasonal flu shot. Our office conducted 22 flu shot clinics during the 2019-2020 season, in addition to offering the vaccine Monday through Friday at 165 Miller Street. All vaccines are given by Registered Nurses.

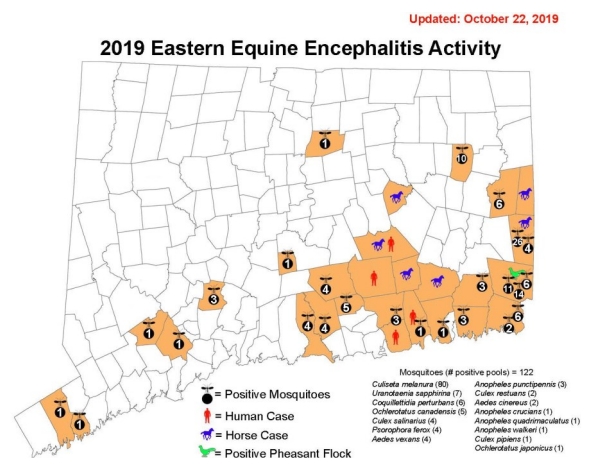
Year	Number of Adult Vaccines Given	Number of Child Vaccines Given
2017-18	865	1629
2018-19	889	1654
2019-20	742	1603

## Eastern Equine Encephalitis

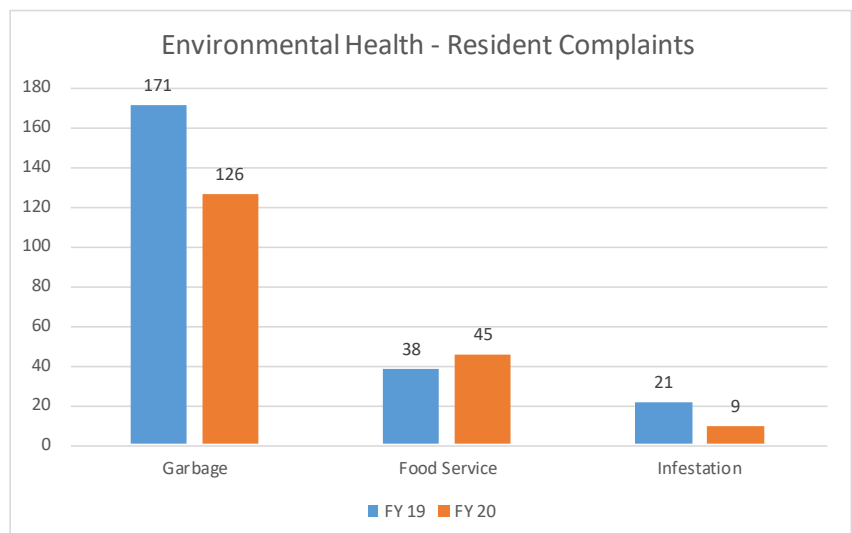
Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) is a rare but serious disease caused by a virus that is spread by adult mosquitoes. On average, there are five cases each year in the United States.

In 2013, there was one reported human case of EEE in Connecticut. In 2019, Connecticut had four human cases of EEE, three of which were fatal. The risk of getting EEE is highest from late July through September. Mosquitoes are trapped, identified, and tested weekly by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) through the statewide surveillance program. In Meriden, the site where these mosquitoes are collected is Falcon Field. To the right is the last activity map posted from the outbreak in the fall of 2019. During this past fiscal year Meriden had no mosquitoes test positive for EEE or West Nile Virus.

Our department created an extensive webpage to keep residents informed on EEE and West Nile Virus activity. We also provided guidance and resources to the Meriden Public Schools and other organizations regarding sporting events and practices.



To the right is a summary of the most common environmental public health complaints received by our office. The most common is for garbage and bulky waste. Other complaints include rodents on properties and lead-based paint issues. Our office investigates all complaints and issues orders to correct according to local and state public health codes.





# 3. Inform and Educate

*Inform and educate about public health issues and functions.*

## Health Education, Promotion and Training

Staff provides education to a variety of community members and stakeholders through various methods such as social media, press releases, articles in community newsletters, attending community events and face-to-face presentations. Below are just some of the topics that have been covered over the past fiscal year:

- Flu Prevention
- Vaping
- Injury Prevention & Lead
- FDA Food Code Changes
- Preparing for an Emergency
- Hoarding
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Immunizations
- Rabies, West Nile, and Lyme Disease Prevention
- Food Recalls
- Food Safety
- Heat and Cold Related Illness

## Childhood Injury Prevention Program

Over the past year we have:

- Held 4 car seat installation classes, providing 151 parents/caregivers with education in collaboration with Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC). Over 4 classes we installed 200 car seats—all at no cost to participants!
- In addition, we have inspected an additional 70 car seats, re-installing or providing a new seat as appropriate.
- Hosted a Car Seat Technician training in which CCMC Safe CT trained 11 new installers, 5 of which are city employees, including our Public Health Educator!
- Presented to state-wide Birthright personnel about our injury prevention program and our collaborations other community agencies.

Since the grant started in October 2015, we have properly installed and checked close to 700 car seats. This program is funded by the Preventive Health and Human Services Block Grant through September 2022. We have received two additional grants from the Department of Transportation to purchase additional seats.

**Buckle Up Meriden!**  
**Every trip, every time!**



Meriden Department of  
Health and Human Services  
[www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

## Mosquito and Rabies Prevention

Annually, our office strives to educate the public on preventing mosquito-borne illnesses. Messaging is posted on social media, on our website, articles submitted to local newsletters, and press releases are sent to the local paper. Actionable steps for both personal prevention and how to reduce standing water and breeding areas for mosquitoes are included.



In May of 2020, our office sent out a public health alert about a bat that was caught and tested positive for rabies. A resident was exposed from this incident and received prophylactic care. This alert was posted on social media and residents were given recommended precautions to take.

## Vaping Forum—State Senator Mary Daugherty Abrams

On November 21, 2019 our Director of Health participated in a community vaping forum held at Maloney High School. Senator Abrams and colleagues discussed what's being done on a state and local level to address the health risks associated with vaping. Discussions included reaching out to the PTA and other school based groups to offer informational trainings on the dangers of vaping to spread awareness to parents, teachers, and other staff who work with youth. This forum was recorded and posted on Facebook for community members to view.



## Get the Facts: Current Drug Trends Program

On November 13, 2019 our department partnered up with the Child Guidance Clinic for Central Connecticut in Meriden and the Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition/Rushford to host an informational program on current drug trends. This program was for parents, community leaders, educators, and counselors to learn about the current drug trends among our youth and how to understand the signs of potential problems. The Meriden Healthy Youth Coalition was able to bring actual paraphernalia for parents, educators, and community leaders to see on display.



## Vaping Presentation and Toolkit

Starting in January of 2020 our Youth and Family Program Assistant and Public Health Educator went out into the community to host informational adult and youth vaping presentations. Presentations were given to all our school nurses and aides, the Success Academy, Hunter's Ambulance Explorer's Program, Southern Connecticut State University, and the MidState Chamber of Commerce Health & Wellness Committee.

In February of 2020 our Public Health Educator met with the Middlesex Chamber of Commerce to offer them guidance on creating their own vaping presentation for an upcoming workshop.

Staff also created a vaping toolkit for parents and educators called, *Clearing the Air: The Truth About Vaping*. This toolkit was sent to local agencies, the Meriden Public Schools, and was shared on our social media page.

The toolkit complements our extensive webpage on vaping and lung injuries, which is updated often with the latest prevention information.



## QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Suicide Prevention Training

The QPR Gatekeeper Training for Suicide Prevention is a brief educational program designed to teach “gatekeepers” - those who are strategically positioned to recognize and refer someone at risk of suicide (i.e. parents, educators, health professionals, etc.) the warning signs of a suicide crisis and how to respond by questioning, persuading, and referring the person to appropriate resources.



Our department hosted two QPR *Question, Persuade, Refer* Suicide Prevention trainings for community members. Between the two events, 36 people in total have been trained as Gatekeepers. Participants included residents of Meriden and colleagues from local agencies.

### Certified Food Protection Manager Classes

In our continued effort to prepare Meriden for the anticipated statewide adoption of the FDA Food Code, our office offered 4 Prometric Certified Food Protection classes (3 in English, 1 in Spanish). Staff continue to prepare as well, having completed an online food inspection quality assurance training in 2019.

Our Environmental Health Administrator also completed a Food Inspection Training Officer (FITO) program, which allows him to train, certify, and recertify staff members in the FDA Food Code inspections.

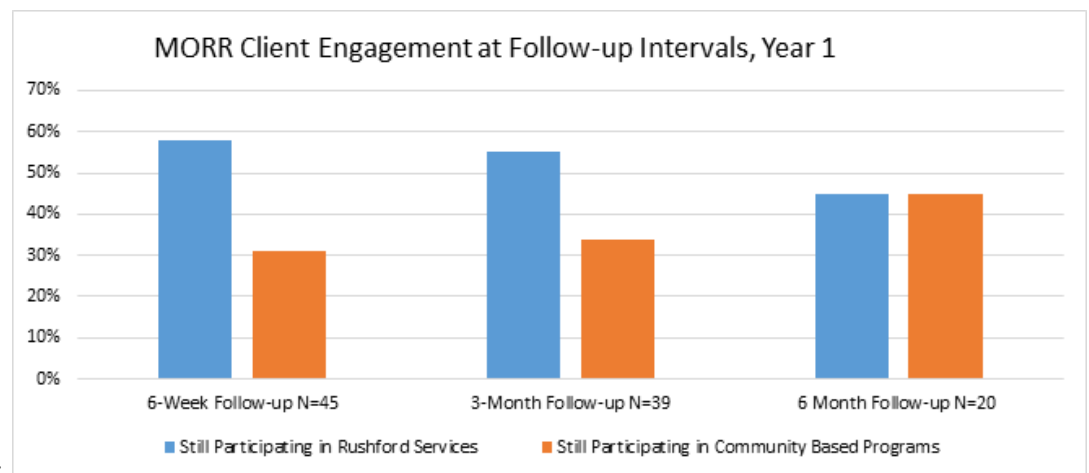
### Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) Program:

In September 2018, the City of Meriden, in partnership with Rushford, was awarded a First Responder Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (FR-CARA) grant from the federal Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). This grant formed the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery (MORR) program. MORR focuses on first responders using Narcan™ to reverse an opioid overdose and then making the connection to services for the client by accessing the Rushford Mobile Crisis Unit. Rushford then provides direct access to a clinician who provides an initial assessment and appropriate referral to treatment.

From February 1, 2019 to September 30, 2019, 50 referrals were made to Rushford, by first responders, for opioid overdose. In that same time period, there were approximately 102 Narcan deployments in the City of Meriden. All grant goals and objectives

for Year 1 were met. 400 Narcan™ kits were purchased and provided to the Meriden Police and Fire Departments, as well as residents and businesses who participated in Narcan trainings. The grant also allowed Rushford Prevention staff to conduct Mental Health First Aid, QPR, and other trainings for First Responders and the public.

The program is funded through September 2022. For more information, please contact the Director of Health, who is the Project Director.



## WIC Education

Meriden WIC continues to support breastfeeding moms. The Meriden WIC initiation rate for breastfeeding and duration were above the state standard for both 2019 and 2020. The standard for breastfeeding initiation is over 70% and our WIC office reported an 82.2% initiation rate in 2019 and an 85.1% rate in 2020. The standard for breastfeeding duration is over 50% and our office reported a 65.2% rate in 2019 and a 68.2% rate in 2020.



In addition to counseling moms prenatally on the benefits of breastfeeding, in December 2019 WIC started the new Breastfeeding Meet Up Group twice a month on Thursdays. This was led by our International Board Certified Lactation Consultant, Dana LaMontagne. Due to the pandemic the group currently meets virtually through a link on the department's website.

## Community Narcan™ Trainings

Group Narcan™ training is an essential part of overdose prevention education where members of the Meriden community can learn what an overdose looks like and what to do to reverse them.

Staff provided these trainings with the intent of empowering community members, opiate drug users, family and friends to save lives. Participants learned about rescue breathing, what Narcan™ is and how to administer it, Good Samaritan laws, and local resources. At the end of this training, participants also received a Narcan™ kit with two doses of Narcan™ in a carrying case.

Our Public Health Educator worked with Rushford to host community Narcan™ trainings for Meriden businesses and residents. These trainings were offered in the morning and evening to try and accommodate people's schedules. Once COVID-19 started, trainings were moved online. The format of the training remained the same and included the presentation with a live demonstration. After completing the online training, our office dropped off the Narcan™ kits, educational materials, and medication disposal bags to participant's homes. We encourage everyone to get trained in the use of Narcan™!

## Mandated Reporter Training

In February of 2020 our department, in conjunction with the Connecticut Department of Children and Families (DCF), hosted a Mandated Reporter Training for Meriden residents and those that work with children in Meriden. In this training, participants learned about the obligation, roles and responsibilities of a mandated reporter and the most recent law changes for Connecticut and preventative measures on how to protect yourself and the children and families served. From this training we were able to train 25 members of the community and people who work in Meriden. Moving forward, all Department staff will complete annual training on this topic, putting another "tool in our toolbox."



# 4. Community Engagement

## ***Engage with the community to identify and address health problems.***

The Meriden Department of Health and Human Services partners with numerous agencies, departments and individuals throughout Meriden to address health problems, provide prevention activities, and promote well being.

### **Meriden Public Library Partnership**

Starting in October of 2019 our Public Health Educator and Youth & Family Program Assistant partnered with the Meriden Public Library to offer programming and health education for clients who came to the library. In person programming included a Snow Slime and Handwashing event in December, a Choose Kindness event in January, and Valentines for Seniors event in February.

In addition to monthly programs, staff gathered educational materials on health topics relevant to the time of year ,such as breast cancer awareness, influenza, and heart disease to create a bulletin board in the library where residents can take brochures and handouts. Our Public Health Educator also submitted monthly articles for the library's newsletter, *Health Beat*, where information on lead prevention, influenza, diabetes, and heart health was provided.



### **Youth Services—Mini-Grant Project**

What positive impact can funding make in our community, and how can youth benefit from being in a leadership position? Through our Youth Service Bureau grant we continue to fund mini-grants to provide youth with just this opportunity.

Projects have to be youth-developed and youth-led, under the guidance of an adult advisor at a recognized organization that serves Meriden. In fall 2019 and spring 2020 we funded 5 projects for a total of \$2,300 granted.

For spring 2020 projects, due to COVID-19 we have extended awardees projects completion due dates to September of 2020.



### **Connecticut Food Bank Distribution**

Starting in October 2019, the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry set up a Farmers Market once a month in the parking lot on the corner of Miller and Center Street, next to our building.

Each month, we provided 75-100 reusable grocery bags with health information to community members at the market. By having the food pantry in a central location, they were able to see well over 100 families each time and provided the essential everyday groceries including produce, dairy, and meat. The mobile food pantry operated monthly through March 2020, but unfortunately had to end due to COVID-19.





## Warming Center Planning

Our Department, along with community stakeholders, started planning for a drop-in warming center for Meriden's homeless population in December 2019 for the 2020-21 winter season. On extremely cold nights during the winter months, local shelters are beyond capacity and cannot meet the demand of the many homeless individuals and families seeking shelter. The warming center will provide a warm, safe environment for this vulnerable population. Planning is still underway, however the original vision of a warming center has changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This workgroup also successfully advocated for a Mayor's Taskforce on Homelessness to be formed in Meriden. This taskforce will be charged with setting goals and objectives to address homelessness in our city. Committee nominations are pending the Mayor's approval.

## Community Action Team

Since 2017, the Associate Director of Health and Environmental Health Administrator have been meeting on a regular basis with Meriden Police, Fire, and Housing Departments, Hunters Ambulance, and Rushford to address the needs of residents using the emergency room for primary care and other issues, including hoarding-like conditions. Referrals to our staff come from City departments and neighbors, some are self-referred. The team also provided two hoarding in-services to the Meriden Police Recruits and SCSU nursing students.

Since inception, our Department has accepted 130 cases. Of these, 117 have been successfully closed and 13 are a work in progress. In addition, staff have completed an additional 362 inspections/visits on the open cases. This project is an excellent example of how community partners and city departments work together to help our residents.

Our Associate Director of Health collected enough donations of winter care items to pack 200 bags for the homeless and those sheltered at a local hotel as part of the state COVID-19 homeless shelter decompression effort.



## Meriden Early Diversion, Referral, and Retention Project (MERR)

In April 2020 the City of Meriden and Rushford received a Law Enforcement and Behavioral Health Partnerships for Early Diversion grant from SAMHSA. This grant formed the Meriden Early Diversion, Referral, and Retention Project (MERR). This grant is similar to MORR in structure, however, allows for the most intensive treatment and referral for mental health, domestic violence, veteran's issues, and reduction in recidivism. This grant allows for police to have an alternate option for resources when an arrest may be avoided. MERR encourages an increase in collaboration with Rushford crisis team, either referring calls to crisis or handing off to crisis team after evaluation of the situation. For example, police respond to a call, identify that there is a chronic mental health need, contact the MERR team to respond out to "finish" working with the individuals and continue to provide ongoing support with the hopes of reducing unnecessary calls to 911/police. MERR allows first responders to refer to Rushford for assessment or call on staff to respond to calls in the community. This grant is funded for 5 years. Please contact the Director of Health for more information.

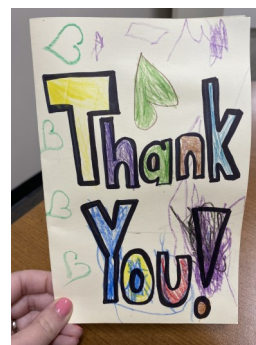


## Youth Services Programming: Babysitting, Youth CPR, Craft Packs, and More

This fiscal year saw an increase in Youth Services programs and partnerships! We offered:

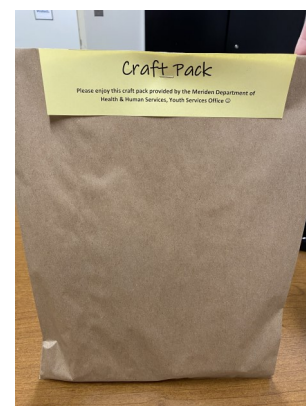
- 1 American Red Cross Babysitting class, certifying 19 youth.
- 1 American Heart Association Heartsaver CPR classes, certifying 12 youth.

Other activities included an ornament decorating event in partnership with YuleFest and Meriden Parks and Recreation, Tobacco 21 promotion, Project Graduation support, QPR (Question, Persuade, and Refer) training, and our partnership with the Meriden Public Library.



### Craft Packs

When COVID-19 started and Youth Services could no longer host in person Programs, our Public Health Educator began creating craft packs for Meriden youth. These were advertised on our Facebook page and left outside our building for families to pick up. These became very popular on Facebook! Our first post for craft packs, which included a Family Handprint Keepsake, reached over 7,000 people on Facebook and were gone within a few hours. From that point, on we continued to find different crafts online, purchased the materials, and distributed them. Since starting this in May we have given out almost 600 craft and activity packs!



### Valentines for Seniors

In conjunction with the Meriden Public Library, we hosted a Valentines for Seniors event at the library, where Meriden youth made cards for our seniors at the Senior Center. This event was a huge success and we were able to make over 75 cards! On Valentine's Day our Public Health Educator and Youth & Family Program Assistant attended the Valentine's Dance at the Senior Center where they hand-delivered the cards the kids made and played a slideshow of photos taken from the event at the library. This was a great way to host an intergenerational event between our seniors and youth. Everyone really enjoyed this program and we hope to do more intergenerational programs and projects in the future!



## 2020 Census

The City of Meriden partnered up with the US Census Bureau to ensure Meriden residents are accurately represented in the 2020 Census. Having an accurate head count helps the government appropriate funding for needed services, including those provided by our department.

On February 19, 2020 our Public Health Educator attended the 2020 Census Press Conference held at the Board of Education Office. At this event Mayor Scarpati, Lt. Governor Bysiewicz and State Representative Hilda Santiago unveiled the city's plan to support and promote the 2020 Census.



## Go Red for Women Day

The American Heart Association's signature women's initiative, Go Red for Women, is a comprehensive platform designed to increase women's heart health awareness and serve as a catalyst for change to improve the lives of women globally.

Our office organized a city-wide event by asking employees of The City of Meriden to wear something red on National Go Red for Women Day on Friday, February 7, 2020. We then went around to city offices, the library, and the Meriden Senior Center to hand out educational materials and those who wore red received a pin from the American Heart Association.



## Daddy & Me Game Nights

Our department partnered up with the local non-profit *Fathering a Community Together (FACT)* and Meriden Children First to host monthly "Daddy & Me Game Nights" in our Teen Conference Room. Fathers in Meriden came to this event with their children to play board games such as Sorry, Trouble, Candy Land, and more to have a fun Friday night out of the house and get to have special bonding time with their children. Both children and fathers enjoyed these events and we hope to be able to host more in the future.



## International Overdose Awareness Day

Rally for Hope & International Overdose Remembrance and Awareness Day was held in Meriden at Hubbard Park on August 31, 2019 where community members and local agencies honored the lives of those we've lost, those in recovery, and help spread awareness to fight the opioid crisis.

Under the Meriden Opioid Referral for Recovery Grant, as part of community outreach, we were able to raffle off medication lock boxes, and pass out hundreds of medication disposal bags and other educational materials and resources.



## Take It to the Box Day at the Senior Center

Throughout the year, staff visited the Senior Center to walk seniors over to the police station to utilize the medication drop box. Staff were able to help the seniors put their medications in Ziploc bags and educate them on how to safely dispose of pill bottles by scratching out their personal information. Staff also provided information on how to dispose of needles used for administering medications at home. Many seniors did not know where this box was located and were unaware of this free service. By bringing the seniors over, a lot of myths and concerns were resolved and they were able to properly dispose of their expired and unwanted medications. After visiting the drop box, lock boxes provided by the MORR grant were raffled off to members who participated.





## Juvenile Assistance and Diversion (JAD)

Funding from the Connecticut Youth Services Association allowed us to partner with Child Guidance Clinic to offer youth in our JAD Program group and individual counseling, education, and support groups. We had 100% positive feedback from youth and families regarding the groups. Additionally, many youth have continued with services at Child Guidance Clinic after their Juvenile Review Board requirements were met, engaging them in much needed services. Through this grant we were also able to offer youth positive youth development activities to help keep them out of the juvenile justice system. Our JAD program had 54 participants this past fiscal year (2019-2020).

## Senior Center

The Meriden Senior Center prides itself on the connections and relationships that have been built with many local agencies and programs that connect seniors with community members of all ages. Over the last year:

- The Center partnered with many local nursing homes, home care agencies, and health care providers to support birthday parties, special events, and holiday celebrations.
- Free tax assistance was provided to over 500 local seniors through a partnership with AARP.
- To keep seniors safe on the road, the Center hosted several AARP Safe Driving classes.
- The Center collaborated with the Meriden Public Schools to hold "Web Wednesdays," where students at Platt and Maloney high schools taught seniors various computer skills.
- Youth from the Connecticut Junior Republic facilitated a craft activity with Senior Center members.
- Local youth from the Success Academy coordinated monthly game days with seniors.
- We offered an 8 week nutrition program sponsored by the Connecticut Food Bank that included a nutritional education component combined with free groceries.
- Hartford Healthcare Center for Healthy Aging gave several presentations on various health topics, including one on dementia.

## Social Services Worker

Our Social Services Worker continues to host two successful events every year:

1. "Tis the Season for a Senior" - a holiday gift giving event where gift donations are collected from the community and distributed to members. The December 2019 event provided gifts to 121 seniors.
2. The Meriden Senior Coat Drive collects coats and warm clothes to be given to seniors. This event collected over 200 coats to distribute to seniors in need.

The Social Services Worker attends community meetings, such as the Meriden/Wallingford Community Collaborative, HOLA (Hispanic Outreach Leaders in Action), and the Meriden/Middlesex/Wallingford Coordinated Access Network (CAN), to promote services and stay up to date in best practices and community resources.



## 5. Develop Policies and Plans

***Develop public health policies and plans.***

## Public Health Emergency Preparedness

Our office receives funding from the Connecticut Department of Public Health to support public health emergency preparedness planning, training, exercising, response, and recovery. This past year, we used our funding to contract with the Chesprocott Health District to share a Public Health Emergency Preparedness Coordinator, who helped the Director of Health complete grant deliverables as well as update plans.



Our office is part of Region 2, which covers 30 towns in the south-central portion of Connecticut.

The following preparedness initiatives were completed over the past fiscal year:

- Planning: Our Public Health Emergency Response Plan (PHERP) was revised. Sections include point of dispensing, risk communications, quarantine and isolation, environmental surety, legal authorities, and pandemic influenza response. In March we also drafted a COVID-19 response plan, but have been using Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), CT DPH, and World Health Organization guidance since then due to the ever-changing nature of the virus.
- Exercising/Real World Events: Each quarter, our office conducts a test of our in-house staff notification system. We also test communications with community partners for site notification of our emergency shelters. We responded to 2 real-world events early in 2020. On December 31, 2019, our office opened an emergency shelter for Shelter Now clients due to a flood in their building. For 2 nights, our Senior Center acted as an emergency shelter to 30 adults and 5 children. In late January, our office responded to a hazmat situation in Meriden, and worked on obtaining air quality testing for the building so upstairs tenants could safely re-enter. After-action reports were written for both events. March 2020 saw Meriden's first COVID-19 confirmed case, and staff have been working on the pandemic ever since.
- Community Education: Emergency preparedness messages are posted regularly to our Facebook page.

## Communication Plans

Our office maintains 2 communications plans:

1. Routine Communications—this plan outlines day to day communications for health education messages to the public.
2. Crisis Communications—if a public health emergency ever happens, the way we communicate with the public changes. This plan outlines our goal to be first, be right, and be credible in the event of an emergency.



## Warming/Cooling Center Plan

In the event the Governor activates the state severe cold weather protocol, or if temperatures in the summer are anticipated to be unseasonably warm for an extended period of time, our office will activate our warming/cooling center plan. The plan is to ensure that our most vulnerable populations are protected. Our office has memorandums of understanding with several locations throughout the city for warming/cooling centers. We may open a physical location, or refer persons to Infoline 211.





## 6. Public Health Laws

### *Enforce public health laws.*

#### **Licensing and Inspections**

Our Environmental Health staff play an important role in preventing foodborne illness and ensuring a safe and healthy environment. Our Registered Sanitarians are responsible for licensing and inspecting food service establishments (including temporary vendors such as food trucks), public swimming pools, and barbershops/hair salons/nail salons. They also respond to public complaints and elevated child lead cases. Both local and state public health codes lay the foundation and guidance for much of their work.

Activity	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Food Service Establishment Inspections	1,177	786	544
Barbershop/Hair/Nail Salon Inspections	40	52	11
Nuisance Complaints and Proactive Sweeps	917	939	1,056
Childhood Lead Inspections	492	478	390
Public Swimming Pool Inspections	24	21	26

The Director of Health submitted a testimony to state officials in support of **HB 5044 AN ACT CONCERNING IMMUNIZATIONS** in February 2020. This act concerns the elimination of religious exemption for vaccination for school attendance.

It was a very active legislative season for public health! There were several raised bills that had the potential to impact the public health of our community and our Department operations. Our office regularly reviews raised bills and has provided testimony through our professional organizations such as the Connecticut Association of Directors of Health.

#### **HB 7200—AN ACT PROHIBITING THE SALE OF CIGARETTES, TOBACCO PRODUCTS, ELECTRONIC NICOTINE DELIVERY SYSTEMS AND VAPOR PRODUCTS TO PERSONS UNDER AGE TWENTY-ONE**

This act raises, from 18 to 21, the legal age to purchase cigarettes, other tobacco products, and e-cigarettes (i.e., electronic nicotine delivery systems and vapor products). It makes corresponding changes in the laws regarding the sale, giving, and delivery of such products to individuals under the legal age (e.g., updating the age on the required sign that cigarette dealers and distributors must display at the point of sale).

#### **SB 233— AN ACT CONCERNING COTTAGE FOOD PRODUCTS AND THE PRODUCTION OF HONEY AND MAPLE SYRUP**

This act transfers from the Department of Consumer Protection (DCP) to the Department of Agricultural (DoAg), regulatory authority over maple syrup and honey production in Connecticut. It does so by exempting all in-state maple syrup and honey production from (1) needing to obtain a DCP food manufacturing license; (2) DCP regulation under the state's cottage food law; and (3) regulation under the state Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FDCA), over which DCP has enforcement authority. "Production" refers to the foods' preparation, packaging, labeling, and sales.

### **HB 7218—AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME AND FIREARM SAFETY PROGRAMS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

This act expands the firearm safe storage laws. Under prior law, the legal duty to securely store a loaded firearm applied when the person in control of the premises knows or reasonably should know that a minor under age 16 is likely to gain access to it without his or her parent's or guardian's permission. The act extends this storage requirement to also include unloaded firearms and increases the age threshold for these purposes to minors under age 18. It also makes changes in the laws related to firearm safety programs for school children, including extending the grade level through which schools may offer such programs to grade 12 instead of grade eight.



### **HB 7159—AN ACT ADDRESSING OPIOID USE**

This act makes various changes in the statutes to prevent and treat opioid use disorder. Among other things it requires pharmacists to offer consultations to all patients when dispensing a prescription, allows pharmacists to designate a trained pharmacy technician to access the state's Prescription Monitoring and Reporting System on their behalf, and requires prescribing practitioners who prescribe an opioid drug with more than a 12-week supply to establish a treatment agreement with the patient or discuss a care plan for chronic opioid drug use.

Here is a list of other bills our Department tracked this past year:

- ◆ **SB 6—AN ACT CONCERNING THE LEGALIZATION AND TAXATION OF THE RETAIL SALE OF MARIJUANA**
- ◆ **SB 10—AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING CLIMATE CHANGE**
- ◆ **SB 11—AN ACT CONCERNING THE RELIABILITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND ECONOMIC VITALITY OF THE STATE'S WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**
- ◆ **SB 16—AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADULT USE OF CANNABIS**
- ◆ **HB 5005—AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2021**
- ◆ **HB 5006—AN ACT MAKING DEFICIENCY APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2020**

**Our office used Bill Tracker to stay on top of these—and other—raised bills that impact public health.**

You can also sign up for Bill Tracker at <https://www.cga.ct.gov/asp/menu/cgabilltracking.asp>

### **City of Meriden—Code Enforcement**

Here are a list of some of the local codes our Department enforces:

- ◆ Chapter 58 Air Pollution
- ◆ Chapter 70 Barbershops, Hairdressing and Cosmetology Shops
- ◆ Chapter 112 Food and Food Services Establishments
- ◆ Chapter 144 Nuisances, Health
- ◆ Chapter 158 Swimming Pools

A full list of the Meriden's City Code can be found on the website at [www.meridenct.gov](http://www.meridenct.gov) under City Services.

# 7. Access to Health Care

***Promote strategies to improve access to health care services.***

## **Meriden Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program**

Meriden WIC currently serves approximately 3,072 people in the Meriden/Middletown area. WIC works in collaboration with other local agencies to promote the health messages associated with WIC. Program enrollment numbers have been declining nationally; outreach was a focus in the last fiscal year and continues to be a priority.

Participants	2017-18	2018-19	2019-2020
Meriden	1,805	1,755	1,815
Wallingford	170	224	176
Middletown, East Hampton, Clinton	1,059	1,083	1,018
Total Participants	3,034	3,062	3,009
Farmers Market booklets distributed @ \$15 each	1,836	2,195	1,901

## **Hepatitis A Initiative**

The goal of this program was to provide free Hepatitis A vaccines to drug users and those experiencing homelessness to prevent disease transmission. The program was developed in response to a CDC Health Advisory released in June 2018 on outbreaks of Hepatitis A infections among these at-risk populations. Connecticut has not experienced an active outbreak.



Our office continues to provide new Meriden Police and Fire Department hires with the Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccines. The state has now allowed us to provide the Hepatitis A and B vaccines to adults at no cost if they are uninsured or have HUSKY insurance. We also held a community stakeholder information session and several education sessions with community partners. Thank you to our community partners for helping us reach the target populations.

## **Senior Mini-Bus Transportation**

Through the Meriden Senior Center, mini-bus rides for in-town medical appointments are available for Meriden residents age 55 and over and for people with disabilities under age 55. This service is provided at no cost and is vital to increase access to health care for our seniors. This year the Senior Center is in the process of purchasing a new mini bus through a 5310 grant award which will allow us to replace a 14 year old bus.

2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
2,974	3,616	3,052



## Social Services and Community Service Work

This year we are happy to announce we added a Community Services Worker to our Department. The Community Services Worker provides social services to families and individuals 18 and older in Meriden with a variety of needs. Services include helping clients manage their basic needs including housing, food, medical, social, and wellness, referrals and follow-ups to agencies and community partners based on necessity, and advocating for clients to help them through situations of crisis and other support. The Community Services Worker also runs the Renters' Rebate program from April to September.



Our Social Services Worker provides:

- Referrals to community social service agencies for food assistance, energy and fuel assistance, protective services for the elderly, legal aide, and other support needs.
- Help with filling out health insurance applications and finding physicians that accept certain health insurance plans.
- Medicare enrollment, counseling, and Medicare Savings Program applications.
- Assistance with housing applications.

Clients Served	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
	1,300	1,144	1,316

### Tuberculosis Screenings

Clinic nurses conducted 167 tuberculosis screenings this fiscal year. This is a 38% decrease from the prior fiscal year (269 screenings). The tuberculosis screening is known as the Mantoux tuberculin skin test (TST), also referred to as a PPD test (purified protein derivative).



### School Health Statistics

Please note: Schools closed on March 13, 2020 due to COVID-19

Service (both public and non-public schools)	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Sick care visits (students)	52,741	56,444	12,517
Sick care visits (staff)	1,232	1,160	181
Psycho-social visits	1,673	2,199	853
Specialized procedures (such as G-tube feedings, tracheotomy care)	8,417	10,840	6,150
Screenings (such as vision/hearing/scoliosis)	10,972	8,000	7,147
Medications administered	26,816	23,297	11,888

## Community Health Center Back to School Physicals Partnership

School physicals are required for entry into Kindergarten, 7th, and 10th grade. Over the summer of 2019, in order to increase access to school and sports physicals, our office partnered with the Community Health Center's School Based Health Center program. Physicals were provided on-site at 165 Miller Street in our Clinic. The service was extremely popular— we reached 66 students. We hope to continue this partnership in future school years to ensure that students are ready to start on the first day of school!



## Support Services to Non-Public Schools

Support Services to Non-Public Schools provides part-time services to students at 4 non-public schools in Meriden: Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Carver Academy, MidState Christian Academy, and Connecticut Christian Academy. Staff include a Speech/Language Pathologist, School Psychologist, and Social Worker.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel announced in February 2020 that they would be closing the school at the end of the school year. Staff provided assistance with regards to their school closure. The School Psychologist and Social Worker went to each classroom to address students needs/concerns and facilitated discussion. Staff also provided teachers with information to educate them on how to best respond to emotional needs of students through this transition. Parents' inquiries regarding their concerns for their students future education were addressed.

Between September 2019 and June 2020 staff:

- Serviced 42% of students in the non-public schools in Meriden.
- Screened all kindergarten, Grade 1 and Grade 2 students (133 total) for speech issues.
- Attended Planning and Placement Team Meetings (PPT's) and made determinations with regard to eligibility for special education services.
- Implemented new social skills program for 4th grade.
- Provided in-service training on phonological awareness and learning disabilities.

Unfortunately, this was the last year of this program. Staff reached out to all students, staff, and parents to provide resources and assistance with regards to the program ending. Individualized packets related to service plan goals were sent home for Speech Language students. Personalized notes were sent to all social work students checking in and offering encouragement. Packets for struggling students were sent home by School Psychologist. All necessary information was communicated to the Board of Education regarding where students would be transferred. Staff spent time closing out the program.

Service	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Speech/Language screenings conducted	229	194	198
Social Work students serviced	33	31	26
School Psychologist students screened/evaluated	81	99	49



## Flu Shot Clinics & Flu Prevention Kits

This season we offered Fluzone HD (for those age 65 and older) quadrivalent, Fluzone quadrivalent (0.5mg for 36 months and older), Fluzone quadrivalent (0.25mg for those 6 to 35 months), Flublok (for those 19 and older), and FluLaval (0.5mg for those 6 months and older).

Our office conducted 22 flu shot clinics during the 2019-2020 season, in addition to offering the vaccine at 165 Miller Street. Clinics were held at/for:

- Board of Education for employees
- City Hall for employees
- Meriden Water/Sewer Department
- Meriden Police Department
- Meriden Public Library
- Meriden Senior Center
- Maloney and Platt High Schools
- Lincoln and Washington Middle Schools
- Fiderio & Sons



In addition, our public health nurses in the elementary schools provided clinic days for staff in their school. We also coordinated flu shot clinics with the Meriden Fire Department to ensure everyone received their vaccine.

Our office also distributed flu prevention kits, with hand-sanitizer, tissues, and a card with flu prevention tips in English and Spanish. These prevention kits were available in our office and given out at outreach events in the community.



## Screenings and Health Events at the Senior Center

Our Senior Center increased access to healthcare by offering screening events and health and wellness programming over the last fiscal year including:

- Live-Well, a 6-week evidence-based program designed to improve wellness for seniors who are living with chronic illness.
- Oral health information sessions with Goodwin College and Lincoln College.
- A health fair sponsored by SCSU.
- Hosting presentations by nursing students, with topics including sun safety, staying hydrated, nutrition, and blood pressure checks.
- Fall prevention programming.
- Mental health discussions with Family Care Visiting Nursing.
- Hearing screenings with Hearing Solutions, LLC.
- A monthly walking club led by staff.



## 8. Maintain a Competent Workforce

***Maintain a competent public health workforce.***

### Staff Trainings

Our Department recognizes that regular staff training is needed to stay current in best practices related to public health and human services. Continuing education is also necessary to maintain certifications required to carry out activities, such as nutrition counseling and lead testing. Trainings are either face-to-face or webinars. Over the past year, staff have participated in trainings on (not an inclusive list):

- FDA Food Code
- Bloodborne Pathogens
- Hoarding and Housing
- Early Childhood Education
- Freedom of Information
- Mental Health First Aid
- Influenza and Vaccinations
- Syndromic Surveillance
- Environmental Health topics
- Opioid Use Disorder
- Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
- School Nursing Practices
- Mandated Reporter Training
- Narcan Training
- Sexual Harassment (City Wide)

### Confidentiality Training

Using the Public Health Accreditation guidelines, the Director of Health reviewed with staff:

- Our role as a public agency under C.G.S. Chapter 14
- C.G.S. 19a-25—Confidentiality of Health Records Procured by the Department of Health or Director of Health
- Confidential versus public records, and when we can release information
- Ways to maintain the security of our records, specifically those that contain private health information

All staff signed off as receiving our Confidentiality and HIPAA standard operating procedure. This training will be held annually for staff.

#### Senior Center Training Days

In September 2019, the Senior Center closed for two afternoons for staff to attend several important training sessions. The sessions included training on:

- Bloodborne Pathogens
- American Heart Association CPR and First Aid
- Creating a welcoming senior center



Our Mini-Bus drivers also received refresher training on how to properly use wheel chair lifts and how to properly secure passengers who use a wheelchair.

Half day trainings will continue on timely topics for our Senior Center staff.

#### Standard Operating Procedures

Our office maintains standard operating procedures (SOPs) for general office operations and program specific operations.



SOPs ensure that we are consistent in our Practices, and are also a useful tool for employee onboarding.

SOPs are reviewed annually; however they are updated throughout the year as public health practices change, new federal/state/local regulations or laws are put in place that affect our operations, or based on employee feedback.

## 9. Evaluation

***Evaluate effectiveness, accessibility, and quality of personal and population-based health services.***

Our Department actively uses performance data to improve the health of Meriden residents through the use of performance measures and standards, to establish performance targets and goals, to prioritize and allocate resources, to make needed changes in policy or program directions to meet goals, and to improve the quality of public health practice. Performance management drives our quality improvement processes.

## Evaluation

We use several types of evaluation:

- Formative evaluation ensures that a program or activity is feasible, appropriate, and acceptable before it is fully implemented.
- Process/implementation evaluation determines whether program activities have been implemented as intended.
- Outcome/effectiveness evaluation measures program effects in the target population by assessing the progress in the outcomes or outcome objectives that the program is to achieve.
- Impact evaluation assesses program effectiveness in achieving its ultimate goals.



## 10. Evidence Based

***Contribute to and apply the evidence base of public health.***

## Research

Before starting any new program or activity we review best practices and data (local if possible) to determine program need, development, implementation, and evaluation. Whenever possible, we involve our community in the development of new programming. Some of the resources we use to evaluate best practices are the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CT Department of Public Health, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), the American Public Health Association (APHA), and the Community Toolbox.



# COVID-19 (Coronavirus)

## Background and Case Count

The City of Meriden and the Health and Human Services Department started closely monitoring the novel coronavirus outbreak since it was first identified in China in December 2019; this picked up steam when the first case was identified in the United States on January 21, 2020 in Washington state. Our Director of Health and Human Services sat in on daily calls from the CDC and CT Department of Public Health planning and preparing for the virus entering Connecticut and, ultimately, Meriden. Connecticut saw its first case of COVID-19 on March 8, 2020 and on March 10, Governor Ned Lamont declared a public health emergency and civil preparedness emergency throughout the State. On March 17, 2020 the City of Meriden followed and declared a local State of Emergency throughout the city. By March 18, Connecticut's case total reached to 96 people and on March 19, 2020, Meriden saw it's first case. Below are the number of confirmed and probable cases reported each month from March until June 30, 2020.

	March	April	May	June
Cases	24	334	414	111

## Daily Meriden Response Updates

Daily response updates were made—now Tuesday and Friday—available on the City of Meriden's website on the COVID-19 webpage. These updates include the number of confirmed and probable cases, nursing home and assisted living data, the number of deaths associated with COVID-19, contact tracing information, Governor's emergency orders, and resources for Meriden residents. Updates and information were also posed on our Facebook page as they became available. Weekly Q & A videos were also posted on Facebook to answer questions from the community. These videos were available in English and Spanish.



As we have come to discover, COVID-19 is a rapidly changing public health situation. Since March, our Department has provided guidance to multiple business sectors, restaurants, hairdressers/barbers/nail salons, our local homeless shelter, day cares, the general public and more about prevention, isolation and quarantine, the Reopen Sector Rules, personal protective equipment, and testing. We continue to provide this guidance, often 7 days per week.

We encourage the public to stay up to date on COVID-19. Here are websites we recommend for information:

- <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/>
- <https://www.who.int/>
- <https://www.fda.gov/home>



(Picture taken in early March 2020)



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Distribution

Every Tuesday starting in mid-April we picked up PPE provided by CT DPH to distribute to healthcare providers in our city. PPE was distributed to our regional local health department lead, then was distributed equally among the departments and districts in our emergency preparedness region (Region 2). PPE quantities varied each week, and included gloves, surgical masks, KN95 masks, hand sanitizer, face shields, touchless thermometers and exam gowns. We in turn reached out to urgent care centers, primary care physicians, dialysis centers, hospice care providers, dental offices providing emergency care, and home health agencies to assess their needs. CT DPH provided long term care facilities, assisted living facilities, and residential care homes weekly PPE directly. This service ended in mid-August.



## Kinsa Thermometers

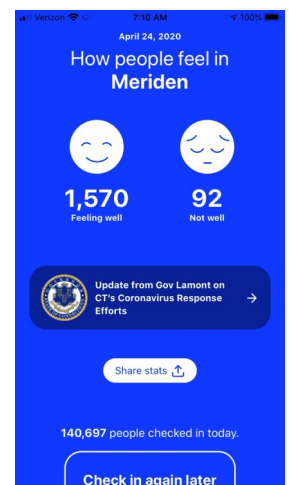
The Governor's Office and CT DPH partnered with Kinsa to distribute 85,000 smart thermometers to at-risk families. The thermometers connect to the Kinsa smartphone app, where persons can input symptoms and receive real-time guidance. Giving thermometers to underserved communities allowed Connecticut to identify hotspots of illness spread and allocate additional resources, such as test kits and PPE to the appropriate areas.

In June, our office distributed 3,000 of these Kinsa thermometers in our community along with COVID-19 prevention educational materials. Thermometers were distributed at the Meriden Public Schools Grab N Go lunch sites, to various Meriden non-profits, and to faith based organizations. Originally, the instructions on how to use the thermometer were only printed and available in English. Keeping in mind Meriden's large Spanish speaking population we were able to reach out to the KINSA company to obtain the set up instructions in Spanish. We then shared these instructions with all health departments and districts in Connecticut.



## How We Feel App

Connecticut partnered with the developers of the "How We Feel" app in an effort to anonymously provide scientists with critical health information needed to understand the spread of COVID-19. Members of the community—whether they are healthy or sick—can report daily symptoms through a series of short questions. This data will be used to identify new populations who are at risk, and measure the efficacy of public health measures such as social distancing. To the right is how Meriden residents felt on April 24, 2020. We encourage everyone to download the app and check in daily!

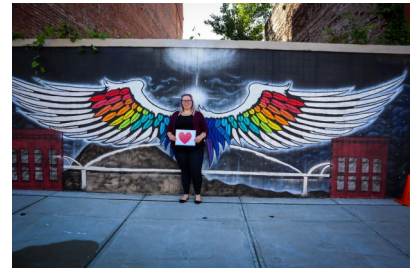


**Changes in operations**— as the pandemic progressed, we have had to change the way we provide public health and human services to our residents. The next few of pages describe these changes for the period of March to June 30, 2020.



## Social Services Assistance

During the pandemic it has been extremely important to ensure that people are able to meet their basic needs, including a healthy diet. The Community Services Worker has collaborated with the Meriden Salvation Army to provide food assistance to high risk individuals and families in the community. Between April and June 2020, the Community Services Worker was able to help 153 families and individuals in need of food assistance.



## Environmental Health

COVID – 19 brought about the closure of public pools, barbershops, hair, and nail salons. Some restaurants decided to close during this period as well due to indoor dining restrictions. We sent out letters to inform businesses about closures and what activities were allowed and not allowed under Governor Executive Orders. Slowly, the Governor's Office phased the reopening of businesses and set Reopen Rules for each sector. Reopening packets and other information was sent to all our food establishments, pools, barbershops, hair, and nail salons via email, mail, and sometimes hand-delivered. Inspections were conducted to verify compliance with the Reopen rules and, in some cases, enforcement actions had to be taken. Reopening and operating during a pandemic is not easy, and our office provided education and PPE resources to ensure compliance. We continue to work with public health facilities—that is any business licensed by us—to ensure compliance with the Reopen Sector Rules, which are often updated by the CT Department of Economic and Community Development.



## School Readiness

By the end of March, all School Readiness programs had closed. Funding from the Office of Early Childhood remained in place until June 30, 2020 so that the programs could stay viable and be ready to serve children when people began back to work. Programs started opening again at the end of May and into June with many changes, including temperature checks, masks, and limited group sizes as required by the CT Office of Early Childhood.

When the programs were closed, staff stayed connected with families via phone, videos, and social media. Story Times were recorded and activities were done virtually through Facebook and YouTube. The School Readiness Council used grant funds to give each child from the School Readiness program starting Kindergarten in fall 2020 a packet of activities to help them get ready for school. Here are just a few of our happy recipients with their packets!



## WIC

The Meriden WIC program had to switch their operation to remote services during the pandemic. This was able to be done with federal waivers which included remote issuance of benefits to participants and medical waivers until September 2020. In addition, food expansion options helped clients purchase food and prevent food shortages. This included increased bread size options and more varieties of eggs and cheeses. During this time, the no show rate improved approximately 10%. WIC staff worked in the office and provided education via phone to keep at risk clients home safely. Clients were kept informed about all changes through Facebook and the WIC Shopper App.

## School Health

Meriden Public Schools closed March 13. Our Associate Director of Health developed school health protocols for the summer school program which included prevention, recognition of symptoms, isolation of ill students or staff, and then exclusion from school or work.

These procedures followed CDC and State Department of Education's mandates and guidance.



## Senior Center

Our Senior Center closed to the public as of March 18, 2020. We quickly transitioned many of our programs and services to provide them from a distance. Isolation has been proven to be one of the most detrimental situations for our seniors so staff have done their best to provide the following services:

- Weekly phone calls to check in with our members, especially those who participate in our meal program.
- Transitioning our in-person congregate meal program to a delivery service where our staff delivered 60 boxes of frozen meals to seniors every week. Each senior received a meal pack containing 5 meals.
- Providing transportation to essential medical appointments.
- Craft kits and activity books were distributed to members who receive weekly lunch deliveries. Video tutorials of crafts and Tai Chi lessons were posted on our Facebook page.
- Each month a local sponsor created beautiful gifts to distribute to our members on their birthdays. Birthday gifts were delivered every month on the third Thursday.
- Social Service Worker and Community Services Worker appointments were held over the phone.



# Department Contact Information

## Meriden Health & Human Services Department

165 Miller Street

Meriden, CT 06450

Main Number: 203-630-4226

Fax: 203-639-0039

Website: [www.meridenhealth.com](http://www.meridenhealth.com)

Lea Crown, MPH  
Director of Health and Human Services  
203-630-4221  
[lcrown@meridenct.gov](mailto:lcrown@meridenct.gov)

Stephanie Denya  
Associate Director of Health  
203-630-4223  
[sdenya@meridenct.gov](mailto:sdenya@meridenct.gov)

Program	Contact	Phone	Email
Environmental Health	Scott Bryden	203-630-4282	<a href="mailto:sbryden@meridenct.gov">sbryden@meridenct.gov</a>
Grants and Finance Specialist	Vicky Zakrzewski	203-630-4229	<a href="mailto:vzakrzewski@meridenct.gov">vzakrzewski@meridenct.gov</a>
Public Health Emergency Preparedness	Lea Crown	203-630-4221	<a href="mailto:lcrown@meridenct.gov">lcrown@meridenct.gov</a>
School Health and Clinic Services	Stephanie Denya	203-630-4223	<a href="mailto:sdenya@meridenct.gov">sdenya@meridenct.gov</a>
School Readiness	Jennifer Baglin	203-630-4222	<a href="mailto:jbaglin@meridenct.gov">jbaglin@meridenct.gov</a>
Senior Affairs	Rick Liegl	203-237-0066	<a href="mailto:rliegl@meridenct.gov">rliegl@meridenct.gov</a>
Social Services Worker	Natalie Gill	203-630-4273	<a href="mailto:ngill@meridenct.gov">ngill@meridenct.gov</a>
Women, Infants, and Children	Shelley Carpenter	203-630-4248	<a href="mailto:scarpenter@meridenct.gov">scarpenter@meridenct.gov</a>
Youth Services—JAD	Tammy Kudla	203-639-5058	<a href="mailto:tkudla@meridenct.gov">tkudla@meridenct.gov</a>
Youth Services/Public Health Education	Elizabeth DeMerchant	203-630-4288	<a href="mailto:edemerchant@meridenct.gov">edemerchant@meridenct.gov</a>